

Hobbies

Further information on the value of flaky U. S. greenbacks

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers questions about U. S. "greenbacks," an always-popular collectible.

Q—My children received Valentine's Day cards from their grandparents. Inside each were new \$5 bills that had left their images on the cards. We saved the currency after reading your recent article about U. S. paper money made with ink that flakes off. What do we do to sell these bills?

K. G., Crystal Lake

A—You should contact coin dealers who specialize in misprinted currency. Several of them advertise in the classified section of the weekly hobby newspaper *Coin World*.

Incidentally, several Tribune readers have reported finding flaky \$1 and \$5 bills of series 1988, which indicates that the error notes are more common than reported earlier. The more such bills that turn up in uncirculated condition, the lower their value as collectibles.

Government printers apparently produced several million flaky bills before they discovered that the ink they were using was bad. Uncle Sam makes paper money with ink supplied by a private company.

Q—Is there a rule of thumb to follow in deciding which \$2 bills to save and which to spend? I've got 55 of them.

Y. H., Chicago

A—Series 1976 Federal Reserve

notes still have almost no special value as collectibles, even in uncirculated condition.

The various series 1953 and 1963 United States notes sell for about \$5 each if they are "like new." Series 1928 bills retail for at least \$6 each in "very fine condition," with the rarest deuce bill in that series—the 1928-B—bringing \$100 or more in "very fine" and about \$400 in "crisp, uncirculated."

Q—Where could I get a \$500 bill? Who is on it?

N. M., Chicago Heights

A—A few coin dealers sell large-denomination bills, but you might have to pay \$700 for an uncirculated \$500 Federal Reserve note featuring President William McKinley. The govern-

ment last printed such money in the 1940s.

Q—Is there any importance to the fact that the serial numbers on dollar bills are printed in bright green ink?

B. C., Chicago

A—For the past several decades, officials have color-coded the serial numbers and Treasury seal to identify bill types.

With just a few exceptions, Federal Reserve notes carry bright green numbers and seals; silver certificates, blue; United States notes, red; and gold certificates, gold. Only Federal Reserve notes have been made since the late 1960s.



At least 450 dealers will buy and sell old coins and other

money-related collectibles in Milwaukee later this week at the annual convention of the Central States Numismatic Society, one of the largest such shows to be held this year in the United States. Hours are 10 a. m. to 7 p. m. Friday, 10 a. m. to 6 p. m. Saturday and 10 a. m. to 3 p. m. next Sunday at the MECCA Convention Center, 500 W. Kilbourn Ave.

Also at the show, officials of the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing will sell uncut sheets of currency, the American Numismatic Association Certification Service will provide free coin authentication and grading opinions, and 400 cases of exhibits will be on display. Admission to the show is free.